

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 16, 2009

The Honorable Ted Strickland  
Riffe Center, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215-6108

Governor Strickland:

As federal dollars from the *Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act* become available, it is all the more critical that Ohioans know that their money is being spent wisely on projects that will create much-needed jobs now and provide for the economic recovery our state desperately needs. Ohio's unemployment rate jumped to 9.4 percent in February, nearly 3 points higher than this time last year.

We are concerned about an *Associated Press* report Monday which stated that your administration "passed over some ready-to-go construction projects" to spend \$57 million on "planning and preliminary studies." According to the article, both Pennsylvania and Oregon put all of their highway dollars into construction while the Federal Highway Administration "has no other examples of states using stimulus money for planning."

This is not the first time that your administration has decided to spend federal stimulus dollars in a manner inconsistent with the intentions of the bill and contradictory to the expectations of recipients.

On March 14, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that the city's public schools might not see "the windfall they expected" due to your decision to circumvent traditional school-funding formulas in favor of models developed by your administration. We have long favored local control over education dollars believing that those involved in the day-to-day decisions of educating our children know best how to spend their resources and so we sympathize with Eric Gordon, chief academic officer of Cleveland's public schools, who said, "It's not [the Governor's] to spend."

While the *Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act* does appear to give governors the flexibility to spend federal stimulus dollars as they see fit, diverting money through non-traditional formulas and impact studies do not uphold the stated intentions of the legislation to create much-needed jobs and put us on the path to prosperity as well as help poor children overcome unnecessary obstacles in their educational needs.

Last month, we called on you to create an independent, bipartisan oversight board to ensure a transparent and open process regarding the State of Ohio's use of federal stimulus dollars. You have declined to do so, instead favoring a Deputy Inspector General. In light of media reports indicating that these federal tax dollars are being allocated to programs that clearly violate the spirit of the law, we again ask that you immediately create an independent oversight board to give Ohioans a full and detailed accounting of how taxpayer dollars have already been spent and all planned allocations for the remainder of the year. Furthermore, we request that <http://recovery.ohio.gov> be updated with a detailed accounting of each additional expenditure within 24 hours from any executive or legislative action that appropriates stimulus dollars.

As we noted in our letter of March 4, while we opposed the stimulus bill – offering instead a Republican proposal that would have created 246,000 jobs in Ohio by the end of 2010 – we continue to hope that it works to boost our economy. We want Ohioans to get back to work, we want families and small business owners to have access to the credit they need and, most of all, we want Ohioans to have a bright future.

Sincerely,

  
  
  


  
  
